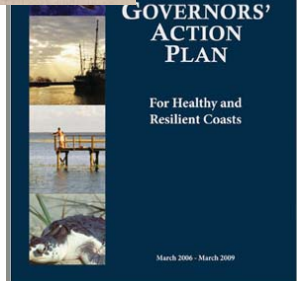
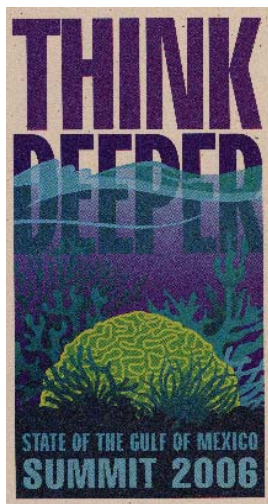


Governors' Action Plan for Healthy and Resilient Coasts Released at State of the Gulf of Mexico Summit



The *Governors' Action Plan for Healthy and Resilient Coasts* was released on March 28, 2006, in a presentation by Colleen Castille, Secretary of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, at the State of the Gulf of Mexico Summit sponsored by the Harte Research Institute for Gulf of Mexico Studies at Texas A&M University in Corpus Christi, Texas. Two



U.S. Governors, Governor Kathleen Blanco (Louisiana) and Governor Rick Perry (Texas), as well as two Mexican Governors, Gobernador Eugenio Hernández Flores (Tamaulipas) and Gobernador Fidel Herrera Beltrán (Veracruz), attended the release ceremony. Agency representatives from all five U.S. Gulf States were in attendance, including the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality, the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality.

The *Governors' Action Plan* addresses five priority issues identified by the Gulf States as regionally significant and more effectively addressed through increased collaboration at state, local, and federal levels. The *Governors' Action Plan* challenges the emerging Alliance partnership to make tangible progress over the next 36 months. It is intended to be a dynamic starting point for effective regional collaboration, setting the stage for a long-term partnership that can address an expanded suite of issues.

Funding opportunity from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

The EPA Gulf of Mexico Program Office announced a request for proposals to strengthen and support the Gulf of Mexico Alliance Regional Partnership. \$3 million are available for projects that support actions across the five priority issues. The deadline for submissions is July 11, 2006. For more information, please review the announcement at: <http://www.epa.gov/gmpo/>



For more information
on the Gulf of Mexico
Alliance and the
Governors' Action Plan,
please visit:

www.gulfofmexicoalliance.org



Water Quality for Healthy Beaches and Shellfish Beds

New BreveBuster Gliders Deployed in Florida

Implementing Governors' Action WQ-1

The BreveBuster is a sensor that can detect the toxic algae, *Karenia brevis* (commonly known as the red tide organism), in coastal waters. With close collaboration between the State of Florida and NOAA, three such sensors were deployed on autonomous underwater gliders off the Southwest coast of Florida in April 2006. This effort greatly enhances the ability to identify the onset of blooms and better predict the transport of blooms.

Binational Expansion of the Harmful Algal Blooms Observing System (HABSOS)

Implementing Governors' Action WQ-1

The HABSOS Program is supported through collaborative efforts of EPA, NOAA, Gulf of Mexico Program, Naval Research Laboratory, National Association of Marine Laboratories, U.S. Integrated Ocean Observing System, and the five U.S. Gulf States. In January 2006, the Gulf of Mexico Program was awarded FY06-07 funds through the EPA Advanced Monitoring Initiatives to support the expansion of HABSOS into Mexico. Working in close partnership with Consejo de Desarrollo del Papalopapan (CODEPAP), the project will support the installation of two coastal meteorological stations and three *K. brevis* (the red tide organism) BreveBuster sensors in the vicinity of Veracruz, Mexico.



Reducing Nutrient Inputs to Coastal Ecosystems

Gulf Region Land Cover Dataset Available

Implementing Governors' Action N-2

NOAA's Coastal Change Analysis Program (C-CAP) completed the land cover data set for the Gulf of Mexico, assisting local governments in infrastructure planning and design. See: <http://www.csc.noaa.gov/crs/lca/gulfoast.html>

A Scientific Assessment of Nutrient Concentrations, Loads, and Biological Response

Implementing Governors' Action N-1

This assessment provides technical assistance to the northern U.S. Gulf States in establishing nutrient criteria in their coastal waters. It provides the best available data for the project study area, Lake Borgne, Chandeleur and Breton Sounds, Mississippi Sound and Mobile Bay, identifies key data gaps, and recommends future monitoring and assessment activities. This approach and knowledge can be applied throughout the region. EPA sponsored an associated technical meeting in Gulf Breeze, Florida, on March 20-21, 2006.



Environmental Education

Environmental Education Coordinator Hired

Implementing Governors' Action ED-1

The State of Alabama and Dauphin Island Sea Lab announced that Lee Yokel will serve as the new Environmental Education Network Coordinator, charged with facilitating Gulf Alliance communication and coordinating regional education and outreach activities.

Kicking Off the Gulf of Mexico Alliance Environmental Education Network

Implementing Governors' Action ED-1

The State of Florida is hosting the first meeting of the new Gulf Alliance Environmental Education Network at the Rookery Bay NERR in Naples, Florida, on June 21-23, 2006. The Network will begin to coordinate ongoing activities that address Alliance priority issues and share effective methods to disseminate materials and programs and engage the public.

Identification and Characterization of Gulf Habitats



Priority Habitat Information System (PHINS) Under Development

Implementing Governors' Action ID-1

Working closely with the five U.S. Gulf States, USGS, USACE and NOAA are working collaboratively to develop a pilot spatial data viewer and digital library for Gulf region seagrass data and information. The web-based product will allow state, local, and federal managers to improve decision-making through significantly increased access to spatial data. NOAA sponsored an associated ecosystem data workshop, focusing on Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi needs, at Stennis Space Center on June 7-8.

Wetland and Coastal Conservation and Restoration



First Gulf of Mexico Alliance Regional Restoration Coordination Team Meeting

Implementing Governors' Action R-1

The Gulf Alliance Regional Restoration Coordination Team is holding its first workshop in Biloxi, Mississippi, on June 12-14, to plan implementation of the restoration action items in the *Governors' Action Plan*. Over forty participants are expected to attend, with representation from each Gulf State, several NGOs, business and industry, academia, and federal agencies. The workshop, organized by the Gulf of Mexico Foundation, lays out an initial long-term vision for restoration activities through the Gulf of Mexico Alliance.

Coastal Impact Assistance Program (CIAP) Draft Guidelines Developed

Implementing Governors' Action R-1

Draft CIAP guidelines were sent for comment to eligible States, counties, and parishes in March 2006, and comments were received in April. In May, the Minerals Management Service (MMS) Gulf of Mexico Region (GOMR) met with representatives from Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas to discuss their comments, and spoke at public meetings in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas public meetings on CIAP.

New Gulf Region Storm Surge Model Under Development

Implementing Governors' Action R-2

NOAA is collaborating with other federal and state programs to develop a prototype decision-support tool for use by emergency managers. These agencies are working together to transform topographic data in the Pensacola, Florida, region from several sources into a common vertical datum. These data will then be comparatively analyzed in existing storm surge models.